

Hebrews 9:11-15a

What did he do? What happened on the cross? What were the effects of this death that we have been reminded of on us? On me? Let us look again to the words of the author of Hebrews. 9:11-15a

“When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant,” Our text tells us that Jesus has entered the eternal sanctuary and that a new

covenant has been formed not based on animal blood but on his own blood. The spiritual effect is threefold.

First of all **it bought my redemption.** Using vivid contrasts the old and the new are set side by side to show the superiority of the new. Although there was beauty and dignity to the earthly tabernacle there is glory and majesty in the heavenly sanctuary. The old was external whereas the new is internal. The old was temporary and had to be repeated again and again the new is lasting and eternal. Think about the animals offered. They had no choice they did not go willingly but Jesus took our sins upon himself by his own choice and decision and Scripture tells us he went willingly. In verse 12 we have the word redemption used. It is a term for the marketplace, the slave market place specifically. It is to procure freedom and to release the captive. By the suffering of Jesus Christ and only by that suffering God provided not only the best solution but also the only solution to our sin problem: a sin problem that led to our being separated from God. I think of the words to

another hymn. **Bearing shame and scoffing rude in my place condemned he stood; sealed my pardon with his blood: Hallelujah! What a Savior!**

The second effect is that it cleaned my conscience. Our text mentions in verse 13 the *blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of heifers sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they can be outwardly clean.*” But that was the extent of its impact. The blood of goats and bulls was used on the Day of Atonement when the high priest went into the holy of holies. The water into which the ashes of the sacrificed red heifers were to cleanse people from their uncleanness after touching a dead body or anything unclean. But it was limited. Severely limited. It only cleaned the outside. It could not impact the conscience. I was speaking with someone not long ago who after having gone through a very painful divorce was then advised to file for bankruptcy. She told about going back to the creditors and still paying what was owed. How they had no record because of the court action and she telling me, “but Joel, I knew inside that I still owed the money and I knew how much. And the only way I could get rid of the debt was to actually pay it off. The death of Jesus Christ cleans our conscience. Part of the Holy Spirit’s work is just that. Not to cover over, or to over-ride, or to ignore but to deal with it. To cleanse it. To actually take away the stain that sin has left. For all sophisticated ceremonial rites, first-century Judaism knew no experience of freedom and release from the consciousness of sin. Christians who had been converted from a Jewish background could rejoice in a clear conscience through Christ’s effective sacrifices.

There is one final impact that I would like to call your attention to. Christ’s complete sacrifice gives life to me service. Scripture again and again illustrates man’s pathetic attempts to please God and bring satisfaction to himself. He has devoted his energies to what our text calls dead works. Two possible meanings here. The first is that it could refer to the ceremonial efforts of people that in reality do nothing to inspire a spiritual life. Or, more likely works that are done outside the

indwelling empowerment of God's Holy Spirit. These efforts, Scripture tell us have no value in God's sight and in no way affect how he views us. They are just that; dead works! We are moved from dead works to serve the living God. And we move from performing certain actions to fulfilling a personal relationship. Did you catch that? Our motive is no longer to somehow gain approval or acceptance by God rather our spiritual service flows out of our relationship. It is our deepening relationship that motivates our actions.

Our text finishes with verse 15 that in many ways is a summary. Christ our mediator has died to set us free and to guarantee our eternal inheritance. So dear ones. Live large in the freedom Christ has given you. Live large with a clean conscience. Live large with a relationship with your Father in heaven purchased, sealed, and secured on Calvary.

Amen